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# Hoax or Horror? A Book That Shook White House

There can be no peace, but endless war may be good for the U. S. anyway—that is the conclusion reported in a volume causing a severe case of jitters in official Washington. Reason: The book purports to be based on a secret, Government-financed study by top experts. Some say it is grimly serious. Others call it leg-pulling satire. Whatever the truth, it is something of a sensation in high places.

Did a select group of prominent Americans meet in secret sessions between 1963 and 1966 and produce a report that advised the U. S. Government it could never afford an era of peace?

Yes—according to the mysterious new book, "Report From Iron Mountain on the Possibility and Desirability of Peace."

No—came a resounding chorus from worried Government officials, who, nonetheless, were double-checking with one another—just to make sure.

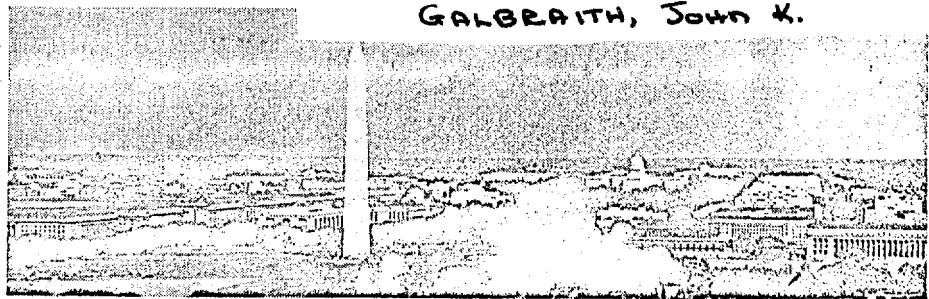
The response of experts and political observers ranged from "nutty" to "clever satire" to "sinister."

Is war necessary? Central theme of the book, which purports to reflect the unanimous view of 15 of the nation's top scholars and economists, is this: War and preparations for it are indispensable to world stability. Lasting peace is probably unattainable. And peace, even if it could be achieved, might not be in the best interests of society.

All this set off a blazing debate in early November, cries of "hoax"—and a "manhunt" for the author, or authors.

Sources close to the White House revealed that the Administration is alarmed. These sources say cables have gone to U. S. embassies, with stern instructions: Play down public discussion of "Iron Mountain"; emphasize that the book has no relation whatsoever to Government policy.

But nagging doubts lingered. One informed source confirmed that the "Special Study Group," as the book called it, was set up by a top official in the Kennedy Administration. The source added that the report was drafted and eventually submitted to President Johnson, who was said to have "hit the



—USN&amp;WR Photo

In Washington, a "manhunt" began for the unidentified author of "Iron Mountain."

roof"—and then ordered that the report be bottled up for all time.

As the turmoil mounted, so did the speculation about those who participated in writing "Iron Mountain."

John Kenneth Galbraith, former Ambassador to India, was quoted by "The Harvard Crimson" as having parried the question of authorship.

Mr. Galbraith, who reviewed "Iron Mountain" under a pseudonym, was reported to have said: "I seem to be, on all matters, a natural object of suspicion." And he added: "Dean Rusk, Walt Rostow, even Robert Bowie could as easily have written the book as I. Yes, Rusk could."

Several sources turned toward Harvard in general as the site of authorship. One even went so far as to suggest that the book is an effort by Kennedy forces to discredit Lyndon Johnson.

A big spoof? Whatever else it was, "Iron Mountain" raised fears at high levels that it would be a mother lode for Communist propagandists. There was also a feeling that if the book is just an elaborate spoof, it is not likely to find understanding or sympathy in world capitals.

"Report From Iron Mountain" was published October 16 by the Dial Press of New York City. It has an introduction by Leonard C. Lewin, a New York free-lance writer.

Mr. Lewin wrote that the manuscript was made available to him in 1966 by a member of the 15-man "Special Study Group" which produced the work.

That person is referred to as "John Doe" and is described as a professor of social science from "a large Middle Western University."

The manuscript identifies "Iron Mountain" as the assembly point for the study group, near Hudson, N. Y.

The Library of Congress, on November 10, told "U. S. News & World Report" that "Iron Mountain" has not been registered. To do so would require divulging at least the nationality of the author.

P. DOE, JOHN  
GALBRAITH, JOHN K.

In the academic community, many held the view that "Iron Mountain" was a hilarious hoax—a kind of dead-pan parody of the studies emanating from the nation's "think tanks."

One history professor at a large Midwestern university, telephoned by "U. S. News & World Report," came on the line with these words: "I didn't do it." But he added: "Whoever did is laughing his sides off. He's saying, in effect, 'Look, if you read and take seriously some of the bilge in these exalted studies, you might as well read and take seriously my little exercise.'"

In all the furor, a literary analogy cropped up. Not since George Orwell's "1984" appeared some 18 years ago has there been such a controversial satire.

"War is Peace." Mr. Orwell's characters spoke a language called "newspeak." They lived by the all-powerful state's slogan: "War is Peace."

In "Report From Iron Mountain," the language is the flat, metallic jargon dear to the U. S. bureaucrat. The message: War is, "in itself, the principal basis of organization on which all modern soci-